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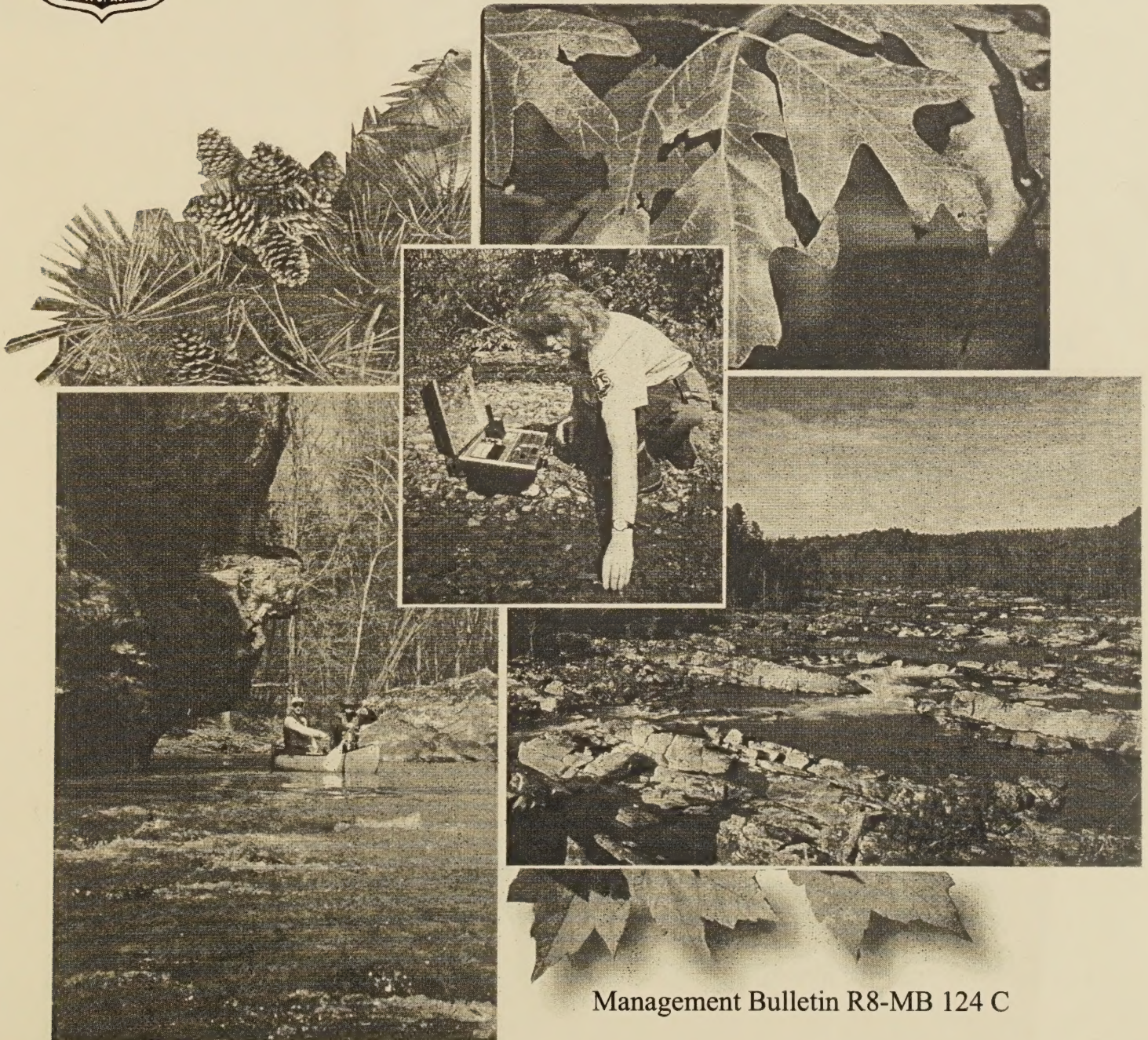
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September 2005



Summary of the Final Environmental Impact Statement Revised Land and Resource Management Plan Ouachita National Forest Arkansas and Oklahoma



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September 2005

SUMMARY

Final Environmental Impact Statement and Revised Land and Resource Management Plan

Ouachita National Forest Arkansas and Oklahoma



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Summary of the Final Environmental Impact Statement and the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan

Introduction

The Ouachita National Forest includes nearly 1.8 million acres of federal land within a 2.5 million-acre congressionally defined (proclamation) boundary. The Forest extends from near Talihina, Oklahoma, to 30 miles west of Little Rock, Arkansas, a distance of more than 126 miles. Located within a day's drive of the St. Louis and Kansas City metropolitan areas and a half day's drive or less from the Dallas-Ft. Worth, Shreveport, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Little Rock, and Memphis metropolitan areas, the Forest's "draw area" includes approximately 57 million people. An estimated 1.54 million recreation visits per year are made to the Ouachita National Forest.

Major forest/woodland types are shortleaf pine-oak, shortleaf pine-grass, and oak-hickory, with some natural loblolly pine in the far southern portions of the Forest. Most indicators of forest/ecosystem health are positive. A severe ice storm in December 2000 and more recent widespread oak decline/red oak borer outbreaks have caused considerable structural change in the vegetation, but ecological resilience is high. The Forest is home to a wealth of animal and plant species, including 14 Threatened or Endangered Species and 66 Sensitive Species.

Figure S.1 provides a guide to the location of the Ouachita National Forest within Arkansas and Oklahoma.



Figure S.1 Vicinity Map Ouachita National Forest

What Is A Forest Plan?

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires all forests to develop plans that direct resource management activities. These plans must be revised when conditions have changed significantly, or on a 10-15 year cycle. The Forest Service published an Amended Land and Resource Management Plan for the Ouachita National Forest in 1990 (1990 Amended Plan), replacing the 1986 Forest Plan, and the 1990 Amended Forest Plan was 15 years old in March 2005. The 1990 Amended Forest Plan has, itself, been amended over 40 times to respond to emerging issues and keep it current.

The 2005 Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) for the Ouachita National Forest provides broad, strategic direction for managing the land and its resources and allocates land to Management Areas (MAs). It does not make project-level decisions, nor does it contain commitments to implement specific projects. Those decisions are made after more detailed analyses and further public comment. Site-specific project decisions must be consistent with the Forest Plan. In some cases, the Plan may be amended to allow projects to be implemented that would otherwise be inconsistent with the Plan.

This Forest Plan was prepared according to the requirements of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other laws and regulations. This 2005 Revised Forest Plan replaces the 1990 Amended Land and Resource Management Plan for the Ouachita National Forest.

The Forest Plan was developed to present the management alternative that, compared with other management alternatives, comes nearest to maximizing net public benefits, consistent with the resource integration management requirements of the 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 219.13 through 219.27, in effect prior to January 5, 2005. The accompanying Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) describes the analysis that was used to compare Forest Plan alternatives and allow the Regional Forester to select the alternative to be used to manage the Forest for the next 10-15 years.

What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

In developing a Forest Plan, the Forest Service examines various alternatives in detail before reaching a final decision about the future management direction for the National Forest. Documentation of the environmental effects of these Forest Plan alternatives is contained in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). The steps in preparing an Environmental Impact Statement include:

- defining the issues
- developing alternatives to address those issues
- estimating and comparing the environmental effects of each alternative

Summary of the Final Environmental Impact Statement

The FEIS provides a detailed analysis of alternatives for management of the Ouachita National Forest. Five alternatives were analyzed. Under the selected alternative, the Revised Forest Plan allocates land to 17 management areas and recommends increases to Flatside Wilderness, Upper Kiamichi Wilderness, and Poteau Mountain Wilderness. The alternatives examined in detail include the 1990 Forest Plan and four alternatives that present a range of projected vegetation management activities and wilderness recommendations. The Selected Alternative for management of the Ouachita National Forest is Alternative E.

Issues

Needs for change identified by the Analysis of the Management Situation and through scoping for the Revised Forest Plan included building upon and improving the Forest's approach to ecosystem management by completing a multi-agency species viability evaluation, addressing ecological restoration and forest health needs, responding to changing recreation needs and demands, including off-highway vehicle use, and considering the changing social, economic, and environmental relationships at the wildland-urban interface. Four significant issue categories were used to develop alternatives for Plan revision: (1) Ecosystem Health and Sustainability; (2) Land Use Designations; (3) Public Access and Recreation Activities and (4) Relationships to Communities.

Alternatives

Alternative A

Alternative A (1990 Amended Plan) would make no changes in management direction in the 1990 Amended Forest Plan, as amended through 2005. Management Areas (MAs), projected resource management actions, and all other Plan components would remain unchanged. The 1990 Forest Plan, as amended, would continue to be implemented. This alternative is the No Action Alternative and serves as a baseline to which the other alternatives are compared.

Ecosystem Health and Sustainability: Current ecosystem management priorities and emphasis would continue. The present emphasis on pine-oak community health and health in communities susceptible to oak decline and other threats to oak-dominated ecosystems would be maintained. These communities would continue to be susceptible to oak decline and southern pine beetle outbreaks. Prescribed burning would treat an average of 68,000 acres per year.

Land Allocation: Current land allocations to MAs would be maintained. No new wilderness recommendations would be made. Lands classed as suitable for timber production would equal 1,019,694 acres.

Public Access and Recreation: Current standards for public access and recreation opportunities would be retained. The Visual Quality Objective system would be retained for visual resource management.

Relationship to Communities: The Forest would continue to seek to improve economic and other relationships with nearby communities.

Alternative B

Alternative B would make no major adjustments to management direction in the 1990 Amended Forest Plan, as amended through 2005. Changes would be limited to those needed to comply with pertinent changes in law and policy; update projections for acres of prescribed burning, thinning, and regeneration harvests; adjust the Forest Plan to the new model format; make cross-country travel by motorized vehicle unsuitable; and remove obsolete or unnecessary direction.

Compared to the 1990 Forest Plan (Alternative A), this alternative would feature a slightly increased emphasis on ecosystem health and sustainability objectives, including program adjustments to respond to the Healthy Forest Initiative and the 2004 revision of the Agency's Strategic Plan.

Ecosystem Health and Sustainability: Current ecosystem management priorities would continue, augmented by a small increase in emphasis on ecosystem health in systems susceptible to oak decline or catastrophic wildland fire. Prescribed burning would increase from 68,000 average annual acres to approximately 125,000 average annual acres.

Land Allocation: Streamside Management Areas would be maintained, with limited vegetative management to meet ecosystem health objectives. Lands classed as suitable for timber production would equal 1,019,694 acres.

Public Access and Recreation: Cross-country travel by motorized vehicles would not be suitable. The Visual Quality Objective system would be retained for visual resource management.

Relationship to Communities: The Forest would continue to seek to improve economic relationships with communities and to seek other opportunities for coordination, including addressing impacts and opportunities represented by the Healthy Forest Initiative.

Alternative C

Alternative C would place the most emphasis on active management for ecosystem health. Management activities would focus on restoring and maintaining native pine-grass, oak woodland, and other fire and disturbance dependant ecosystems. Activities such as prescribed burning and thinning would be more intensive than the other alternatives. Compared to the 1990 Amended Forest Plan (Alternative A), this alternative would place greater emphasis on actively managing for improved ecosystem health and sustainability. These objectives would be achieved by aggressively restoring and maintaining native pine-grass, oak woodland, and other fire-adapted ecosystems.

Ecosystem Health and Sustainability: Vegetation management would emphasize restoration and maintenance of lower density, insect outbreak and disease-resistant forest and woodland ecosystems. Tools for improving forest health, particularly areas at risk of disease, pest, and/or invasive species infestation (southern pine beetle, oak decline, non-native invasive plants) would include a mix of silvicultural techniques, prescribed fire, and minimal pesticide use. Activities such as prescribed burning and thinning would be more intensive than the other alternatives especially within pine-oak and some hardwood-dominated communities. Prescribed burning would increase from 68,000 average annual acres to approximately 250,000 average annual acres. Acres estimated to be susceptible to southern pine beetle infestation would decline from 272,000 to 66,000.

Land Allocation: Three additions to existing wilderness areas would be recommended: 620 acres to the Flatside Wilderness in Arkansas, 77 acres to the East Unit of Poteau Mountain Wilderness in Arkansas, and 1,096 acres to the Upper Kiamichi Wilderness in Oklahoma. Streamside Management Areas would be maintained, with limited vegetative management to meet ecosystem health objectives allowed. Lands classed as suitable for timber production would equal 1,017,901 acres.

Public Access and Recreation: Open road density objectives would be modified to reflect a more realistic approach than the 1990 Forest Plan to areas that have a high density of non-National Forest System roads. Other access would be as in the 1990 Forest Plan, except that cross-country motorized access would not be suitable, and the Forest would move, within the next four years, to a system of designated routes. The Scenery Management System (SMS) would be implemented, with greater emphasis placed in heavily used traffic corridors and lakes.

Relationship to Communities: This alternative would produce more timber, reduce fuels in the wildland-urban interface, and produce more smoke related short-term impacts. The Forest would continue to seek to improve economic relationships with communities and to seek other opportunities for coordination, including addressing opportunities represented in the Healthy Forest Initiative.

Alternative D

Compared to the 1990 Forest Plan (Alternative A), this alternative would maintain or make modest changes in projections for most forms of forest management, with increases in prescribed burning and thinning in MA 21-Old Growth Restoration (Pine-Grass Emphasis) and 22-Renewal of the Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem Ecosystem and Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Habitat, walk-in turkey hunting areas, and cooperative wildlife management areas. This alternative would not thin as many acres as Alternatives C or E. More emphasis would be placed on scenery enhancement in vistas along travel corridors and areas adjacent to lakes. Program adjustments would be made to reflect the Healthy Forest Initiative, including addressing fuel levels near communities at risk.

Ecosystem Health and Sustainability: Vegetation management would emphasize attaining minimum levels of habitat needed for species viability. "Watchable wildlife," including important birding areas, would be promoted. Restoration of native pine-grass and oak woodland ecosystems would be expanded in support of wildlife management objectives in walk-in turkey areas and wildlife management areas to support hunting-based recreation. Prescribed burning would increase from 68,000 average annual acres to approximately 100,000 average annual acres. Acres estimated to be susceptible to southern pine beetle infestation would decline from 272,000 to 90,000.

Land Allocation: New recommended wilderness areas in Arkansas would include Brush Heap, Blue Mountain, and Irons Fork. Additions to Flatside Wilderness, Upper Kiamichi Wilderness, and an addition to the East Unit of Poteau Mountain Wilderness in Arkansas would also be recommended. Streamside Management Areas would be maintained with limited vegetative management to meet ecosystem health objectives. Lands classed as suitable for timber production would equal 989,567 acres.

Public Access and Recreation: Open road density objectives would be modified to reflect a more realistic approach to areas that have a high density of non-National Forest System roads. Cross-country motorized vehicle access would not be suitable, except for cross-country travel for retrieval of big game. The Scenery Management System (SMS) would be implemented, with greater emphasis placed in heavily used traffic corridors and lakes.

Vegetation management would promote “watchable wildlife,” in appropriate areas including important birding areas.

Relationship to Communities: This alternative would produce a slight increase in positive economic impacts related to recreation and tourism and a slight decrease in positive impacts related to timber harvesting. The Forest would continue to seek to improve economic relationships with communities and to seek other opportunities for coordination, including opportunities presented by the Healthy Forest Initiative.

Alternative E

Compared to Alternatives A, B, and D, this alternative would place greater emphasis on actively managing for improved ecosystem health and sustainability. These objectives would be achieved by increasing the rate of restoration and maintenance of fire-adapted systems such as native pine-grass and oak woodland communities, but not at the rates or intensity proposed under Alternative C.

Ecosystem Health and Sustainability: Prescribed burning would increase from 68,000 average annual acres to approximately 180,000 average annual acres. Major ecological systems and rare upland communities would receive increased management to enhance ecosystem health and species viability. Acres estimated to be susceptible to southern pine beetle infestation would decline from 272,000 to 63,000.

Land Allocation: Three additions to existing wilderness areas would be recommended: 620 acres to the Flatside Wilderness in Arkansas, 77 acres to the East Unit of Poteau Mountain Wilderness in Arkansas, and 1,096 acres to the Upper Kiamichi Wilderness in Oklahoma. Streamside Management Areas would be maintained with limited vegetative management to meet ecosystem health objectives allowed. Lands classed as suitable for timber production would equal 1,016,228 acres.

Public Access and Recreation: Open road density objectives would be modified to reflect a more realistic approach to areas that have a high density of non-National Forest System roads. Cross-country access by motorized vehicles would be unsuitable. The Scenery Management System (SMS) would be implemented, with greater emphasis placed in heavily used traffic corridors and lakes. Management for scenic integrity may affect prescribed fire locations. Other vegetation management would be visually mitigated. Vegetation management would promote “watchable wildlife,” in appropriate areas including important birding areas.

Relationship to Communities: This alternative would produce more timber, reduce fuels in the wildland-urban interface, and produce more smoke related short-term impacts, but less than Alternative C. The Forest would continue to seek to improve economic relationships with communities and to seek other opportunities for coordination, including opportunities presented by the Healthy Forest Initiative.

Comparison of the Alternatives

Table S.1 provides a summary comparison of alternatives using various measures.

Table S.1 Summary Comparison of Alternatives

<i>Response Measure</i>	<i>Alternative</i>				
	A No Action	B	C	D	E Selected
Acres in Fire Regime 1, Condition Class 1 or 2, 1 st 10-Year Period	266,000	122,000	535,000	283,000	291,000
Acres in southern pine beetle Risk Category 1, 1st 10-Year Period	272,000	275,000	66,000	90,000	63,000
Acres of hardwood forest in high risk categories	91,000	91,000	7,000	91,000	84,000
Acres Suitable for Timber Production	1,019,694	1,019,694	1,017,901	989,567	1,016,228
Acres designated/recommended as wilderness	64,469	64,469	66,262	94,596	66,262
Acres in Management Area 9, Water and Riparian	278,284	278,284	278,284	278,284	278,284
Uneven-aged management emphasis (total area in acres)	250,000	110,000	100,000	200,000	125,000
Projected average annual thinning acres, 1st 10-Year Period	26,226	17,400	51,700	27,700	28,500
Prescribed fire (projected total average annual acres)	68,000	125,000	250,000	100,000	180,000
Acres of mast producing hardwood	297.5	297.5	297.5	297.5	297.5
Allowable Sale Quantity (MMCF), Average Annual	26.2	26.2	33.0	25.0	27.0
Employment Average Annual 1st 10-year period	3,894	3,796	3,941	3,842	3,898
Labor Income (\$ Million)	107.2	103.8	109.4	105.5	107.6
Annual Budget (\$ Million)	22.7	22.8	23.7	22.9	23.1
Annual Net Revenue (x 1\$ Million) 1st 10-Year Period	6.0	6.5	1.8	5.5	6.8
Long-Term Sustained Yield (MMCF)	50.0	57.8	73.7	63.2	69.3

Ecosystem health and sustainability is one of the major, broad issues identified for this 2005 Revised Forest Plan. Without a healthy and sustainable forest, most other opportunities and resource values that are forest-dependent, such as recreational opportunities, wildlife, timber harvest, and clean water would be jeopardized or in marked decline. Table S.2 includes indicators used to measure forest health and sustainability by alternative: number of species with viability scores of “good” to “very good”; acres in Fire Regime 1, Condition Class 1 or 2; acres susceptible to southern pine beetle outbreaks, and acres of hardwood in high-risk categories. Alternative C has the highest number of species with viability scores of “good” to “very good,” closely followed by Alternative E. Due to its more aggressive treatment regime, Alternative C would have the most acres in Fire Regime 1, Condition Class 1 or 2 and the fewest hardwood acres rated as “high risk.” Alternatives C and E have the fewest acres projected to be susceptible to southern pine beetle infestation. Considering all factors, Alternative C could be considered the “maximum health” alternative.

Table S.2 Issue Category: Ecosystem Health and Sustainability

Issue Measure	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Species Viability (numbers of species in good to very good condition of 80 species forest-wide)	27	42	59	39	53
Acres in Fire Regime 1, Condition Class 1 or 2	266,000	122,000	535,000	283,000	291,000
Acres in southern pine beetle Risk Category 1	272,000	275,000	66,000	90,000	63,000
Acres of hardwood forest in high risk categories	91,000	91,000	7,000	91,000	84,000

Measures used to address land use designation issues and describe the allocations of National Forest System lands are shown in Table S.3 and include acres of existing and recommended wilderness, water and riparian areas (MA 9), and acres suitable for timber production. Alternative D recommends the addition of the most acres for wilderness (approximately 30,100 acres). All alternatives maintain nearly equal protections for water and riparian areas and assign the same acreage to Management Area 9. Acres suitable for timber production also remain fairly constant, although the wilderness recommendations cause minor decreases in Alternatives C and E and by, reduction of acres suitable for timber production, reflect the larger wilderness recommendation of Alternative D.

Table S.3 Issue Category: Land Use Designations

Issue Measure	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Acres of Wilderness and Recommended Wilderness	64,469	64,469	66,262	94,596	66,262
Acres in Management Area 9, Water and Riparian	278,284	278,284	278,284	278,284	278,284
Acres Suitable for Timber Production	1,019,694	1,019,694	1,017,901	989,567	1,016,228

The issue of public access and recreational activities is addressed in Table S.4 with measures to reflect changes in the transportation system, OHV use, quality of non-motorized opportunities, and number of deer, turkey, and quail per square mile. Road density is a key factor in measuring disturbance to wildlife. Under Alternatives C, D, and E, road density standards would be imposed that clarify how the Forest would undertake to limit open road density for wildlife purposes. Under Alternatives B, C, D, and E, cross-country travel by motorized vehicles would not be suitable, while under Alternative A, such travel would remain suitable. Under the action alternatives, where OHV and other motorized vehicle use would be projected to move from cross-country travel to designated routes within four years, the quality of non-motorized opportunities should increase, because noise interference by vehicles would be reduced. As hunting is a recreational activity, the number of game species is an important measure. Because it is the alternative with the most intensive management, Alternative C, has the highest projected density of game animals (deer, turkey, and Northern bobwhite).

Table S.4 Issue Category: Public Access and Recreational Activities

Issue Measure	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Transportation System	Current	Current	New road density objective	New road density objective	New road density objective
Off Highway Vehicle Use (for cross-country travel)	Suitable	Unsuitable	Unsuitable	Unsuitable (except for large game retrieval)	Unsuitable
Quality of non-motorized opportunities	Current	Higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
Deer per square mile	12.8	13.2	22.7	13.4	13.7
Northern bobwhite per square mile	35.2	29.1	42.7	37.8	36.6
Eastern Wild Turkey per square mile	3.4	2.7	5.9	3.2	3.3

Table S.5 provides some measures that compare the relationship of the Forest to communities. Measures include the projected timber harvest volume and the economic values associated with timber harvest. All measures are reported for the first ten years of Forest Plan implementation. Although timber harvest volume would be greatest under Alternative C, when costs are deducted, the alternative with the greatest net revenue would be Alternative E. Average annual employment and labor income from that employment would be greatest under Alternative C, followed closely by Alternatives A, D, and E.

Table S.5 Issue Category: Relationship of the National Forest to Communities

Issue Measure	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E
Projected Timber Harvest Vol. (MMCF) 1 st 10-year Period	261.8	261.8	330.0	250.0	270.0
Annual Net Revenue (\$ Million) 1 st 10-Year Period	6.0	6.5	1.8	5.5	6.8
Employment Avg. Annual 1 st 10-year Period	3,894	3,796	3,941	3,842	3,898
Annual Labor Income (\$ Million)	107.2	103.8	109.4	105.5	107.6

Selected Alternative

Alternative E was selected for implementation as the 2005 Revised Forest Plan based on a careful and reasoned comparison of the environmental consequences of and responses to significant issues for each alternative. Alternative E represents the best mix and balance of management strategies that: 1) are responsive to the issues, concerns, and opportunities expressed by the public and other agencies; 2) establish ambitious but achievable objectives for ecosystem management, the transportation system, recreation opportunities, and relationships with local communities (including timber and scenery management, increased attention on the urban-wildland interface, and protection of public source waters); and 3) recognize the need to make relatively modest additions to existing wilderness areas while sustaining well distributed and abundant opportunities for semi-primitive and roaded-natural recreation experiences. More specifically, the Selected Alternative (Alternative E) will:

- increase the acres in Fire Regime Condition Class 1 or 2
- reduce the acres in the high risk category for southern pine beetle infestation
- reduce the acres at high risk for oak decline and other hardwood “health” problems
- improve the prospects for long-term viability of species of concern
- maintain or increase populations of most management indicator species
- have the highest net revenue from timber sales during the planning period

In summary, Alternative E represents the best balance among the diversity of interests and uses of the Forest and maximizes net public benefits. The Selected Alternative builds upon and improves an ecosystem-based, multiple-use management strategy that has guided the Forest since 1990 and embodies a strong conservation ethic. The Selected Alternative meets many of the desires of the public and local communities to actively use and enjoy the Ouachita National Forest and to maintain or improve the local and regional quality of life, including economic opportunities.

Summary of the Revised Forest Plan

Introduction

The Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) guides all natural resource management activities for the Ouachita National Forest. To accomplish this, the Forest Plan:

- Establishes long-range goals (desired conditions) and shorter-term objectives (generally for the next 10-15 years)
- Specifies Management Areas and associated standards and anticipates the rates or levels of management practices that will be applied
- Establishes monitoring and evaluation requirements that provide a basis for periodic determination and evaluation of the effects of implementing the Forest Plan

The Revised Forest Plan was developed in accordance with the provisions of the National Forest Management Act, its implementing regulations and other pertinent guidance. Together, land allocations (Management Areas), and design criteria (standards) represent a statement of long-term management direction. Projected outcomes, services, and rates of implementation are dependent on the annual budgeting process, among other variables.

The Forest Plan sets the context for project development. Projects may be proposed to respond to public requests or as part of regular Forest Service programs. Projects address differences between current conditions and desired conditions.

When a project is proposed, the suitable use and use strategy descriptions are reviewed for compatibility with the proposed activities. If the project is an allowable use, appropriate and relevant standards are incorporated. The proposed action is then analyzed using appropriate National Environmental Policy Act procedures. If the project is inconsistent with plan direction, the project may be redesigned or rejected, or a plan amendment may be considered.

A forest plan provides a framework guiding future management decisions and actions. As such, a plan does not create or execute any ground-disturbing activity. A plan in and of itself does not grant, withhold, or modify any contract, permit, or other legal instrument; does not subject anyone to civil or criminal liability; and creates no legal rights. A plan by itself is not an action-forcing document.

Organization of the 2005 Revised Forest Plan

The revised forest plan follows the national, three-part model for new forest plans. There are three interrelated parts.

Part 1, the Vision, describes the Ouachita National Forest's roles and contributions; desired conditions (36 CFR 219.11(b)) for the various landscapes within the Forest; and evaluation/monitoring indicators (36 CFR 219.11 (d)) that will be used to assess the progress made toward accomplishing the desired conditions. Part 1 includes:

- *Distinctive Roles and Contributions of the Forest.* The Vision begins with a description of the Forest, including its distinctive roles and contributions to the local area, states, region, and nation.

- *Desired Conditions.* Desired conditions describe how the Forest is expected to look and function in the future when forest plan direction has been successfully implemented. Desired conditions are described using the ecological, economic, and social attributes that characterize or exemplify the outcomes of land management. The degree to which the Forest achieves the desired conditions will be monitored. Desired conditions are not commitments and may be achievable only over the long term.
- *Evaluation/Monitoring.* Descriptions of planned monitoring and evaluation are included after each statement of desired conditions.

Part 2, the Strategy, describes the objectives (36 CFR 219.11 (b)) that the U.S. Forest Service intends to implement in order to move the Forest toward the Vision described in Part 1; types of land use by Management Area (MA); and past and anticipated future management performance. It also includes a landownership adjustment and a monitoring strategy.

Part 3, the Design Criteria, includes the management standards (36 CFR 219.11 (c), 219.13 through 219.27). Standards are mandatory requirements that apply to site-specific activities. Design criteria are intended to assure that projects protect resources and are consistent with achieving the objectives and desired conditions for the Ouachita National Forest, as a whole, and the desired conditions and strategies for the MAs.

A Glossary of Commonly Used Terms and a Glossary of Commonly Used Abbreviations and Acronyms follow Part 3.

This Forest Plan

The 2005 Forest Plan will guide the management of the Ouachita National Forest for the next 10 to 15 years. The Forest Plan provides direction to assure coordination of multiple-uses (outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, wildlife and fish, and wilderness) and sustained yield of products and services [16 USC 1604(e)]. It fulfills legislative requirements and addresses local, regional, and national issues and concerns. The Forest Plan represents the Selected Alternative (as discussed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision) for managing the land and resources of the Ouachita National Forest.

The 2005 Forest Plan sets out the following:

- Management direction and associated long-range goals and objectives for the next 10-15 years to provide for multiple use and sustained yield of the products and services people use from the Forest, including outdoor recreation, range, timber, water, wildlife, fish, and wilderness. The Forest Plan establishes management priorities and 43 specific objectives to address these priorities over the next 5-15 years are located in Part 2. [36 CFR 219.11(b)]
- Management Areas, that reflect biological, physical, watershed, and social differences; and management prescriptions, that reflect different desired conditions, to provide specific information to be used to develop projects to implement the Forest Plan. The Forest Plan establishes 17 Management Areas in Part 2 and displays them on the Forest Plan map. [36 CFR 219.11(c)]

- Forest-wide and Management Area specific standards that set the sideboards for achieving the goals, objectives, and desired conditions and provide meaningful direction when implementing projects in Part 3 of the Forest Plan. [36 CFR 219.11(c) and 36 CFR 219.13 to 219.27]
- Suitable uses of National Forest System Lands in Part 2 of the Forest Plan. Cross-country travel by motorized vehicles, including off-highway vehicles is unsuitable. Approximately 1,016,000 acres or 57 percent of the National Forest are designated suitable for timber production. The maximum harvest level (or Allowable Sale Quantity) is found in Part 2 of the Forest Plan and is determined to be 27 million cubic feet annually for the next 10 years. Other discussions of suitability are found in Part 2 of the Forest Plan. [36CFR 219.14) and 36 CFR 219.16]
- Three areas recommended for wilderness additions to be managed within Management Area 1c, Recommended Wilderness Additions, until Congress acts to designate them. [36 CFR 219.17] These recommendations are preliminary administrative recommendations that will receive further review and possible modification by the Chief of the Forest Service, the Secretary of Agriculture, and/or the President of the United States. The Congress has reserved the authority to make final decisions on wilderness designation.
- Monitoring and evaluation requirements in Parts 1 and 2 [36 CFR 219.11(d)]. Part 1 identifies outcome level performance measures for each desired condition. These are long-term measures of movement toward the respective desired condition. Part 2 identifies program strategies and associated performance indicators. Project-level adaptation, triggered by annual reviews of selected projects, is focused on the effectiveness of project design criteria (presented in Part 3).
- Establishment of the R. R. Reynolds Research Natural Area within the Crossett Experimental Forest to be managed as a part of Management Area 4, Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks. [36 CFR 219.25]
- One river recommended as a National Wild and Scenic River. A 16.5-mile reach of the Glover River in Oklahoma will be managed within Management Area 20, Wild and Scenic Rivers. This recommendation is carried forward from a 2002 Amendment to the 1990 Amended Forest Plan.
- Designation of lands administratively available for oil and gas leasing and consent to the Bureau of Land Management to offer specific lands for leasing (36 CFR 228.102(d) in Part 2 of the Revised Forest Plan. This consent/no objection decision is valid until the Forest Service provides the Bureau of Land Management written notification that consent is withdrawn or amended.

MANAGEMENT AREAS

Table S.6 displays the Management Areas for the 2005 Revised Forest Plan with a comparison to 1990 Forest Plan Management Areas. More detailed descriptions of the Management Areas follow.

Table S.6 Management Areas

Management Areas (MAs) for 2005 Revised Forest Plan	Management Areas (MAs) for 1990 Forest Plan
MA 1: Wilderness (1a); Poteau Mountain (1b), Proposed Wilderness Addition (1c)	MA 1: Wilderness; MA 1a: Poteau Mountain
MA 2: Special Interest Areas: Scenic Areas (2a); Watchable Wildlife Areas (2b); Rich Mountain Botanical Area (2c); Rich Mountain Recreation Area (2d)	MA 2: Scenic Areas
MA 3: Developed Recreation Areas	MA 3: Recreation Sites
MA 4: Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks	MA 4: Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks
MA 5: Experimental Forests	MA 5: Alum Creek and Crossett Experimental Forest
MA 6: Rare Upland Communities	MA 6: Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Species Habitat
MA 7: Ouachita Seed Orchard	MA 7: Ouachita Seed Orchard
MA 8: Administrative Sites/Special Uses	MA 8: Administrative Sites
MA 9: Water and Riparian Communities	MA 9: Water and Riparian Areas
MA 10: Reserved	MA 10: Non-Forest
MA 11: Reserved	MA 11: Not Appropriate for Timber Production
MA 12: Reserved	MA 12: Unproductive
MA 13: Reserved	MA 13: Ouachita Mountains, Unsuitable Lands Based on Other Resource Coordination
MA 14: Ouachita Mountains, Habitat Diversity Emphasis	MA 14: Ouachita Mountains, Lands Suitable for Timber Production
MA 15: West Gulf Coastal Plain, Habitat Diversity Emphasis	MA 15: Coastal Plain
MA 16: Lands Surrounding Lake Ouachita and Broken Bow Lake	MA 16: Lake Ouachita
MA 17: Semi Primitive	MA 17: Semi-Primitive Motorized
MA 18: Reserved (scenic management direction converted to Forest-wide direction)	MA 18: Visually Sensitive Foreground Areas, Roads And Trails
MA 19: Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation Area (and Associated Non- Wilderness Designations)	MA 19: Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation and Wilderness Area (OK) and Rich Mountain Recreation and Black Fork Wilderness Area (AR)
MA 20: Wild and Scenic River Corridors	MA 20: Wild and Scenic River Corridors
MA 21: Old Growth Restoration	MA 21: Old Growth Restoration
MA 22: Renewal of the Shortleaf Pine/Bluestem Grass Ecosystem and Red- Cockaded Woodpecker Habitat	MA 22: Renewal of the Shortleaf Pine/Bluestem Grass Ecosystem And Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Habitat
MA 23: Reserved (Broken Bow Lake was incorporated with Lake Ouachita in MA 16)	MA 23: Broken Bow Lake

MANAGEMENT AREA 1A. DESIGNATED WILDERNESS

Total Acres: approximately 64,469

Six congressionally designated wilderness areas totaling approximately 64,469 acres are located within the Forest. These areas are unsuitable for timber production, withdrawn from mineral leasing, unsuitable for motorized travel, and unsuitable for livestock grazing.

The wilderness acts that established these areas are as follows:

- The Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975, Public Law 93-622: Caney Creek Wilderness, Arkansas (14,460 acres).
- Arkansas Wilderness Act of 1984, Public Law 98-508: Blackfork Mountain Wilderness (8,350 acres); Poteau Mountain Wilderness (11,299 acres), Dry Creek Wilderness (6,310 acres) and Flatside Wilderness (9,507 acres), all in Arkansas.
- Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation and Wilderness Area Act of 1988, Public Law 100-499: Blackfork Mountain Wilderness (4,789 acres) and Upper Kiamichi Wilderness (9,754 acres), both in Oklahoma.

MANAGEMENT AREA 1B. POTEAU MOUNTAIN MANAGEMENT AREA

Total Acres: approximately 3,958

Management Area 1b consists of land between the two separate units of the Poteau Mountain Wilderness. As part of the deliberations leading up to the Arkansas Wilderness Act of 1984, the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs determined that the area possessed a “very high wilderness potential” but “is also popular for off-road vehicle use...it should remain open to motorized use.” The committee requested that the Forest Service manage this area to “maintain its existing wild character, with no timber harvest, mineral leasing, or new road construction permitted.” Management Area 1b is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with controlled surface use, and unsuitable for livestock grazing.

MANAGEMENT AREA 1C. RECOMMENDED WILDERNESS ADDITIONS

Total Acres: approximately 1,793

Management Area 1c consists of lands adjacent to Flatside Wilderness and the East Unit of Poteau Mountain in Arkansas and Upper Kiamichi Wilderness in Oklahoma that are recommended as additions to the National Wilderness System. Management Area 1c is unsuitable for timber production, withdrawn from mineral leasing, unsuitable for livestock grazing, and is managed for wilderness potential. If Congress adds these areas to the National Wilderness Preservation System, they will automatically become part of MA 1a.

MANAGEMENT AREA 2. SPECIAL INTEREST AREAS

- 2a. Scenic Areas, approximately 2,700 acres
- 2b. Watchable Wildlife Areas, approximately 5,853 acres
- 2c. Botanical Areas: Rich Mountain, approx. 3,200 acres, and South Fourche, approximately 2,580 acres (the Cove Creek Lake Project Area, approximately 324 acres surrounded by the South Fourche Botanical Area, is specifically excluded from the botanical area)
- 2d. Rich Mountain Recreation Area, approximately 12,980 acres

Special Interest Areas consist of Scenic Areas, Watchable Wildlife Areas, two Botanical Areas, and one large, undeveloped recreation area (Rich Mountain). Most of Management Area 2 is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration with a controlled surface use stipulation, and unsuitable for livestock grazing. Approximately 3,700 acres of the 12,980-acre Rich Mountain Recreation Area are suitable for timber production; the remaining acres are unsuitable.

MANAGEMENT AREA 3. DEVELOPED RECREATION AREAS

Total Acres: approximately 5,189

Management Area 3 consists of developed recreation sites. Development ranges from an essentially natural environment with few facilities to a high degree of site development with comfort and convenience facilities, including features such as paved roads, water systems, flush toilets, and boat-launching ramps. Included within this management unit are campgrounds, picnic areas, horse camps, interpretive and observation sites, information sites, float camps, shooting ranges, and swimming areas. Management Area 3 is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with no surface occupancy, and unsuitable for livestock grazing. Management Area 3 is unsuitable for OHV use.

MANAGEMENT AREA 4. RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS AND NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARKS

Total Acres: approximately 2,115

Management Area 4 includes the following areas:

Name	Unit	Acres
Roaring Branch	Caddo	330
Gap Creek	Caddo	1,225
Lake Winona	Winona	280
Tiak RNA	Tiak	200
R.R. Reynolds	Crossett Experimental Forest	80

Roaring Branch and Lake Winona have dual status as Research Natural Areas (RNA) and National Natural Landmarks. Designated under 36 CFR 251.23, RNAs provide continued opportunity for studies of ecological succession and other research interests in a setting where disturbance by humans is very limited. Administration and protection are supplied by

the National Forest, with scientific and educational uses coordinated through the Southern Research Station. The 80-acre R. R. Reynolds Research Natural Area on the Crossett Experimental Forest in Ashley County, Arkansas is established under the 2005 Revised Forest Plan. Management Area 4 is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with no surface occupancy, unsuitable for OHVs, and unsuitable for livestock grazing.

MANAGEMENT AREA 5. EXPERIMENTAL FORESTS

Total Acres: approximately 6,021

Management Area 5 consists of the Alum Creek Experimental Forest on the Winona Ranger District, and the Crossett Experimental Forest in Ashley County, Arkansas. These areas are administered in cooperation with the Southern Research Station. Experimental Forests are withdrawn from entry for locatable minerals. For leasable minerals, no surface occupancy is applied. Management Area 5 is unsuitable for timber production but suitable for livestock grazing.

MANAGEMENT AREA 6. RARE UPLAND COMMUNITIES

Total Acres: approximately 48,030

Management Area 6 consists of Rare Upland Communities, including upland (non-riparian; non-bottomland) areas supporting one or more natural communities that are relatively rare or uncommon in the Ouachita Mountains or West Gulf Coastal Plain. These communities are managed to perpetuate or restore their ecological integrity, including high-quality habitat for certain sensitive species. These patchy systems range from a few acres to a few hundred acres. A prescribed fire program that mimics the natural fire regime is an important management tool for restoring and maintaining most of these communities and providing for patch connectivity among the interspersed communities. The natural communities included are: Ouachita Mesic Hardwood Forest; Ouachita Montane Oak Forest; Ouachita Dry Oak Woodland; Ouachita Novaculite Glade and Woodland; Central Interior Acidic Cliff and Talus; Central Interior Highlands Dry Acidic Glade and Barrens; and West Gulf Coastal Plain Calcareous Prairie. Riparian, lowland, and seep communities are included in MA 9, Water and Riparian Communities. Management Area 6 is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with no surface occupancy, and may be suitable for livestock grazing.

MANAGEMENT AREA 7. OUACHITA SEED ORCHARD

Total Acres: approximately 636

Management Area 7 consists of an established seed orchard managed for the production of improved seed from shortleaf pine, loblolly pine, and certain hardwoods. MA 7 is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with no surface occupancy, and unsuitable for livestock grazing. The Ouachita Seed Orchard is unsuitable for OHV use.

MANAGEMENT AREA 8. ADMINISTRATIVE SITES /SPECIAL USES

Total Acres: approximately 551

Management Area 8 consists of district ranger offices, district work centers, district residences, Forest Service communication facilities and sites for communication facilities under special use permit, and the administrative site within the seed orchard. Management Area 8 is unsuitable for timber production and available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with no surface occupancy. Special Use sites are suitable for livestock grazing. A list of the approved communication sites and those pending approval as of September 30, 2005, is included in Appendix A of the Revised Forest Plan. Roads, rights-of-way, utility easements, and other linear features are not included as a part of Management Area 8 but are interspersed within other management areas.

MANAGEMENT AREA 9. WATER AND RIPARIAN COMMUNITIES

Total Acres: approximately 278,284

Management Area 9 consists of Water and Riparian Communities, including streams, rivers, lakes and ponds, and Streamside Management Areas necessary to protect water quality and associated beneficial uses found within the Ouachita Mountains, Arkansas River Valley, and West Gulf Coastal Plain. Management Area 9 direction applies to streams, riparian areas, ponds, and lakes, except where even more stringent management requirements are in place, notably in Wilderness (MA 1). Included are flowing and non-flowing aquatic habitats; wetlands; woodland seeps and springs; portions of floodplains; variable distances (but at least 100 feet) from both edges of all perennial streams and from the shores of bodies of water equal to or greater than one-half acre; variable distances (but at least 30 feet) from both edges of other streams with defined stream channels and ponds less than one-half acre in size; and certain lands surrounding public water supplies, lakes, and streams. Management Area 9 is unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with no surface occupancy, and is suitable for livestock grazing.

Public water supply surface sources that have lands of the Ouachita National Forest within the source area include Broken Bow and Wister Lakes in Oklahoma and the following source areas in Arkansas: South Fork Reservoir (Cedar Creek), Iron Forks, and James Fork Reservoirs; Hamilton, Nimrod, Ouachita, Waldron, Winona, and Square Rock Lakes; and the Caddo, Middle Fork Saline, Ouachita, Petit Jean, and Saline (eastern) Rivers. See Appendix E for a map of the designated source waters.

The riparian-associated vegetation communities that occur in this MA include Ouachita Mountain Forested Seep; Ouachita Riparian; South-Central Interior Large Floodplain; and West Gulf Coastal Plain Small Stream/River Forest.

MANAGEMENT AREA 14. OUACHITA MOUNTAINS-HABITAT DIVERSITY EMPHASIS

Total Acres: approximately 740,583

Management Area 14 consists of extensive blocks of upland (non-riparian) forest located throughout the Ouachita Mountains. The primary community types, each of which also occurs in other MAs, are Ouachita Pine-Oak Forest; Ouachita Pine-Oak Woodland; and Ouachita Dry-Mesic Oak Forest. The Ouachita Mountains-Habitat Diversity Emphasis MA includes all National Forest System lands in the Ouachita Mountains not assigned to special areas. These lands are available for varied intensities of ecosystem management and roaded-natural recreational opportunities. Management Area 14 includes areas suitable and unsuitable for timber production, available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with standard stipulations, and suitable for livestock grazing.

MANAGEMENT AREA 15. WEST GULF COASTAL PLAIN-HABITAT DIVERSITY EMPHASIS

Total Acres: approximately 13,066

Management Area 15 consists of lands in the West Gulf Coastal Plain of southeastern Oklahoma that are available for varied intensities of timber, wildlife, fisheries, range management and roaded-natural recreational opportunities. The primary community type represented here is West Gulf Coastal Plain Pine-Hardwood Forest. Additional Forest lands in the West Gulf Coastal Plains of southern Arkansas are included in MA 5 (Experimental Forests), and other portions of the southeastern Oklahoma Coastal Plain lands are included in MA 2 (Special Interest Areas), MA 3 (Developed Recreation Areas), MA 4 (Research Natural Areas and National Natural Landmarks), MA 6 (Rare Upland Communities), MA 8 (Special Uses/Administrative Sites), and MA 9 (Water and Riparian Communities). Management Area 15 is suitable for timber production (with a few exceptions), available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with standard stipulations, and suitable for livestock grazing.

MANAGEMENT AREA 16. LANDS SURROUNDING LAKE OUACHITA AND BROKEN BOW LAKE

Total Acres: approximately 87,153

Management Area 16 includes National Forest lands surrounding Lake Ouachita in Arkansas and Broken Bow Lake in Oklahoma. All management activities within this area are designed to address wildlife and recreation objectives and the protection of resource values for each lake. The overriding objective is to sustain the unique combination of recreational, aesthetic, wildlife, and water quality values represented here. Portions of this MA are suitable for some timber management activities; others such as steep slopes are unsuitable. Management Area 16 is available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with controlled surface use stipulations, and suitable for livestock grazing.

MANAGEMENT AREA 17. SEMI-PRIMITIVE AREAS

Total Acres: approximately 136,091

Management Area 17 consists of areas that (a) meet the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) criteria for motorized and non-motorized semi-primitive recreation settings and (b) are not included in other MAs. (Wilderness areas (MA 1), the Poteau Mountain Area (MA 1b), portions of some special interest areas (MA 2), and National Forest lands around Lake Ouachita and Broken Bow Lake (MA 16), for example, also offer either semi-primitive motorized or non-motorized recreation opportunities or both. Emphasis in this MA is to provide motorized and non-motorized semi-primitive recreation experiences. Management is dictated by recreational and wildlife objectives that provide for a semi-primitive experience and a range of wildlife habitats. Management Area 17 is available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with standard stipulations, and is suitable for livestock grazing. For areas identified in the following tabulation, timber harvesting and road construction are deferred for the planning period except for actions needed to address threats to forest health, including thinning of any existing pine plantations and control of southern pine or Ips beetle outbreaks.

Area Name	Approximate Acres
Black Fork Mountain	406
Blue Mountain	11,678
Brush Heap	8,353
Cedar Mountain	3,428
Flood Mountain	4,915
Fourche Mountain	2,403
Irons Fork Mountain	8,303
Leader Mountain	9,185
Little Missouri Area	1,226
Statehouse Mountain	3,612

In the remainder of MA 17, including most walk-in turkey areas, more active forest management may be implemented.

MANAGEMENT AREA 19. WINDING STAIR MOUNTAIN NATIONAL RECREATION AREA AND ASSOCIATED NON-WILDERNESS DESIGNATIONS

Total Acres: approximately 79,897

Management Area 19 contains lands designated by the Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation and Wilderness Area Act of 1988, Public Law 100–499, except for the two wilderness areas, which are included with other Forest wilderness in MA 1, Wilderness. A variety of outstanding recreational opportunities exists in MA 19. Lands within this area are both suitable and unsuitable for timber production; however, suitable acres are only managed in support of recreational and wildlife objectives that are compatible with the National Recreation Area and other special designations. Management Area 19 is available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with controlled surface use stipulations and suitable for livestock grazing. Designations in the Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation and Wilderness Act included in MA 19 are listed in the following tabulation:

Area Name*	Acres
19a. Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation Area	25,890
19c. Robert S. Kerr Memorial Arboretum, Nature Center, and Botanical Area	8,256
19e. Beech Creek Botanical Area	380
19f. Beech Creek National Scenic Area	6,200
19g. Indian Nations National Scenic and Wildlife Area	29,171

*19b and 19d (Rich Mountain Recreation and Botanical Areas) from the 1990 Amended Forest Plan were moved into MA 2.

Designations in the Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation and Wilderness Act included in MA 1 (Wilderness) are the Oklahoma portion of Blackfork Mountain Wilderness and Upper Kiamichi Wilderness, which is entirely in Oklahoma. Rich Mountain Recreation Area and Rich Mountain Botanical Area, both in Arkansas and formerly part of MA 19, are now part of MA 2, Special Interest Areas. MA 19 is subdivided into several distinct areas to address the designated areas named and numbered above. The wilderness areas in the Act are now included in MA 1. Other letter designations used in the Act and in the 1990 Amended Forest Plan are continued in the Revised Forest Plan.

MANAGEMENT AREA 20. WILD AND SCENIC RIVER CORRIDORS AND RECOMMENDED WILD AND SCENIC RIVER CORRIDORS

Total Acres: approximately 26,571

Management Area 20 consists of the corridors of the congressionally designated Cossatot and Little Missouri Wild and Scenic Rivers and approximately ½-mile wide corridors for the Ouachita, forks of the Saline (eastern), Caddo, Glover, and Mountain Fork Rivers. The 16.5-mile segment of the Glover River within the Forest is recommended as an addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System with a classification as “scenic.” The remaining rivers are eligible for consideration as components of the National System, but suitability

studies are deferred to the respective States due to the very limited extent of National Forest (or other federal) lands within the corridors of these rivers. Management activities and practices will protect the inherent qualities of the rivers that have not been congressionally designated, including their “outstandingly remarkable features.” River-related recreational opportunities that are compatible with the outstandingly remarkable features of these rivers and their corridors will be offered. The lands within this MA are unsuitable for timber production. Designated rivers are congressionally withdrawn from mineral activity, and rivers under consideration for designation will have a No Surface Occupancy stipulation applied. Management Area 20 is suitable for livestock grazing subject to management area design criteria. Management Area 20 has been subdivided into three distinct areas: 20a. Designated Wild River Segments; 20b. Scenic River Segments; and 20c. Recreational River Segments. See Management Area 20 design criteria (Part 3 of this Plan) for tables listing specific segments.

MANAGEMENT AREA 21. OLD GROWTH RESTORATION (PINE-GRASS EMPHASIS)

Total Acres: approximately 70,379

Management Area 21 includes 35 separate old growth restoration units, ranging in size from 600 acres to nearly 6,000 acres. The emphasis in this MA is the restoration and perpetuation of pine-grass old growth forests, woodlands and other old growth conditions associated with frequent fire. Inclusions of existing hardwood stands will also be managed for old growth characteristics. Maintenance or restoration of other kinds of old growth forests (including other hardwood-dominated forests), woodlands, and glades will be accomplished in other management areas. See additional discussion of old growth in Appendix D.

Restoration of pine-grass old growth forests and woodlands fills a missing component (an ecological gap) among existing communities of the Ouachita Mountains, created largely by decades of fire suppression and large-scale logging in the 1920s and 1930s. Pine-grass old growth systems will provide habitat for a wide range of wildlife, including both late seral stage species and some open area associates. Portions of this area (replacement stands) are suitable for timber production under long rotations. MA 21 is available for oil and gas exploration and leasing; however, no surface occupancy is allowed in the core area and controlled surface use stipulations apply in the remainder of this management area. MA 21 is suitable for livestock grazing subject to management area design criteria.

MANAGEMENT AREA 22. RENEWAL OF THE SHORTLEAF PINE-BLUESTEM ECOSYSTEM AND RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER HABITAT

Total Acres: approximately 188,002

Management Area 22, an area for the renewal of the Shortleaf Pine-Bluestem Grass Ecosystem and Red-cockaded Woodpecker habitat, is located on National Forest land on the Poteau/Cold Springs, Mena, and Oklahoma Ranger Districts. These lands consist primarily of extensive blocks of Ouachita Pine-Oak Forest, Ouachita Pine-Oak Woodlands, and intermingled stands of Ouachita Dry-Mesic Oak Forest. In addition to providing extensive areas in which restoration of pine-bluestem ecosystems is featured, MA 22 incorporates two

Habitat Management Areas (HMAs; one in Arkansas, one in Oklahoma) for the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker (RCW).

Management Area 22 is available for oil and gas exploration and leasing with controlled surface use stipulations on the entire management area except for the Blue Moon Wildlife and Fisheries Demonstration Area, where no surface occupancy stipulations apply. MA 22 is suitable for livestock grazing subject to MA design criteria. Acres in this Management Area are both suitable and unsuitable for timber production. Active RCW stands, recruitment stands, and recruitment clusters are all unsuitable for timber production. As required by the 1995 Red-cockaded Woodpecker EIS, HMAs (MA 22a) have been designated. HMA acres are shown by Ranger District in the following tabulation:

District	Total
Cold Springs	6,581
Mena	11,147
Poteau	66,584
Tiak	50,945
Total	135,257

The remaining part of MA 22 (entirely in Arkansas) is the Extended Area, or MA 22b. The Extended Area provides for renewal of the shortleaf pine-bluestem grass ecosystem and future expansion habitat for RCWs.

Suitable Uses

Table S.7 indicates whether the following uses are suitable, unsuitable, or both suitable and unsuitable within each Management Area:

- Timber Production
- Public Use of Off-Highway Vehicles
- Livestock Grazing
- Road Construction, Powerlines, and Linear Rights of Way

Table S.7 Suitability by Management Area

Management Area	Timber Production	Public Use of OHVs ¹	Livestock Grazing	Road Construction, Power lines, Linear ROW
1. Wilderness & Poteau Mtn.	U	U (S, Designated Routes in Poteau Mtn)	U	U
2. Special Interest Areas	S + U (parts of 2d are suitable)	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions	S, Restricted
3. Developed Recreation Areas	U	U	U	S, Minimum Necessary
4. Research Natural Areas & National Natural Landmarks	U	U	U ¹	U
5. Experimental Forests	U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
6. Rare Upland Communities	U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
7. Ouachita Seed Orchard	U	U	U	S, Minimum Necessary
8. Administrative Sites/Special Uses	U	S, Designated Routes	S + U, FW Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
9. Water/Riparian Communities	U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions MA Restrictions	S, Restricted
14. Ouachita Mountains, Habitat Diversity Emphasis	S + U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
15. W. Gulf Coastal Plain, Habitat Diversity Emphasis	S + U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
16. Lands Surrounding Lake Ouachita & Broken Bow Lake	S + U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions MA Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
17. Semi-Primitive Areas	S + U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
19. Winding Stair Mountain NRA (and associated non-Wilderness designations)	S + U (parts of 19a, f, and g are suitable)	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions MA Restrictions	S, Restricted
20. Wild and Scenic River Corridors	U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions MA Restrictions	S, Restricted
21. Old Growth Restoration	S + U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions MA Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary
22. Renewal of the Shortleaf Pine/ Bluestem Grass Ecosystem and RCW Habitat	S + U	S, Designated Routes	S, FW Restrictions MA Restrictions	S, Minimum Necessary (Not allowed in RCW clusters)

S = Suitable, U = Unsuitable, S + U = both Suitable and Unsuitable

¹ See Public Use of Off-Highway Vehicles section for clarification on the timeframe for when trails and roads will be designated for OHV use.

Public Involvement and Comment

The Notice of Intent (NOI) to begin the revision process and the formal public scoping period was published in the Federal Register on May 1, 2002. Written public comments were received and logged in at the Forest Supervisor's Office in Hot Springs, Arkansas, during the formal public scoping period of May 1 through August 2, 2002. Four public meetings were conducted in June 2002 to provide information about the revision process and to solicit public comment.

In September and October 2003, two series of public meetings ("open house" format) were conducted in various locations across the Ouachita Mountains. The first series provided forums for discussion of off-highway vehicle use on the Forest, considered one of the most important issues for Forest Plan revision. The second series of meetings focused on key inventory data for Forest Plan revision, including scenic quality, species viability, and roadless areas. In April 2004, three more public open houses were held to invite feedback and discussion concerning the draft alternatives for the proposed Revised Forest Plan.

Plan Revision newsletters were periodically published and distributed to the Forest Plan mailing list (consisting of 2,500 individuals, groups, agencies, and organizations at its peak) during the planning process. The proposed Revised Forest Plan and accompanying DEIS were made available for review by the public, other agencies, tribal officials, and other elected officials on February 25, 2005; comments regarding the Forest Plan documents were accepted if they were postmarked (or email dated) by May 27, 2005. In addition to distributing hard copies of the draft documents to those who requested them, three public meetings were held to provide information on how to comment. The Forest Supervisor made copies available to all interested parties on the Ouachita National Forest website and on compact discs and widely advertised the availability of all forms of the plan documents to the public, other agencies, Indian tribes, and elected officials. See Appendix A of the Revised Forest Plan for additional information regarding public involvement in this process. Appendix A also includes a summary of substantive comments received and Forest Service responses to those comments. Comment letters from other federal and state agencies and elected officials are reproduced in their entirety.

Availability of the 2005 Revised Plan and FEIS

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Revised Plan are available on the Ouachita National Forest website at www.fs.fed.us/r8/ouachita. Paper or CD copies are also available on request. Copies of the documents are also available at the Forest Supervisor's Office in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

For more information on the Final Environmental Impact Statement or Revised Forest Plan, please contact Alett Little at (501) 321-5372.

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